Among the Barons

# By Margaret Peterson Haddix

In a world where you can only have two children, Luke is out of place. His parents have had a third child – him. Luke Garner spent his first twelve years of his life hiding in the attic. He used to be able to go outside in to the woods behind his house, but since then there has been building behind there. Luke saw all of the houses being built from a crack in the attic, and one day he spots a curtain move in one of the houses. But that morning he had seen two boys leave the house along with the parents. And there’s only one explanation – there’s a third child in their family. So one day he sneaks over there and finds a girl, Jen, – a third child. After that her family finds him out and gives him a life. Or at least, an identity. He takes on the identity of Lee Grant a second child who died, but the public wasn’t told about. Lee was a baron, a rich kid. Mr. Talbot, Jen’s father, had given him the identity then driven him to the Hendricks School a place where a lot of third children go when they get an identity. Luke lives there for a few months then runs into a big surprise.

Lee’s brother, Smits is coming to the school and expecting Luke to act like Lee.

Luke doesn’t want Smits to come. He doesn’t want to act like someone else. He wants to hang with his friends, and just use Lee Grants identity. In fact, he would be satisfied if he never met any of the Grants in his whole life. But it gets from bad to worse. After Smits sets a fire, the Grants want him to come home. And not only Smits, but ‘Lee’ too.

When Luke gets there everything in their mansion is big and confusing. No one will talk throughout the dinner, there’s a chandelier in their garage, and his bedroom is so big that it probably could be five bedrooms.

Then when ‘Mom and Dad’ come get him in the night, it takes about 10 minutes to go from worse to horrible. Why? Because the parents want him to die. Not die really, just stage a death. Thoughts run through his head like crazy.

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‘*We want you to die...*

*You couldn’t get another identity....*

*You were in hiding before... What’s the big deal about hiding now?*

The Grants might as well kill him for real and be done with it, Luke thought. Hiding again would be practically as bad as dying.